WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 SEPTEMBER 1981

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

THANKS TO GLFS AND A LOT OF VOLUNTEERS WCHS AGAIN MAKES GOOD AT ART FAIR

Income from WCHS Art Fair activities will be reported next time because bank statements weren't in at press time but it promises to be a goodly amount, again thanks to Great Lakes Federal Savings.

WCHS sold canned pop and Norman Rockwell prints on consignment, rented parking spaces after hours and is to receive proceeds from rental of booths in front.

Special thanks for making this possible go to Hazel Proctor, vice-president for marketing, Carol Hunt of her staff, Richard Robtoy, general services manager, and Nancy Weinmann.

Rosalie Moore was general chairman, assisted by Ethelyn Morton and Mary Blaske. Jane Southwell made signs.

Booth helpers were Betty Arndt, Dr. John Bean, Betty Bjork, Flora Burt, Janet Clute, Frances Couch, Reeva Cranor, George and Mary Campbell, Lois Foyle, Carol Freeman, Bob Gamble, Mrs. Herbert Gauderer, Virginia Gutknecht, Mary Heaid, Mary Ann Henigar, Harold Jones and Julia Konkle.

Others were Mrs. K. Y. Ma, Grace Maxfield, Elizabeth Nicol, Connie Osler, Janet Rocco, Kate Ross, Helen Schmutz, Wilma Steketee, Esther Warznyski, Marian Whitker, Johanne Wiese, Millicent Willits, Maxine Witting, Lucille Zink and Alice Ziegler.

Parking cars were Bob Bailey, Mary and Tom Blaske, John Chrisman, James Crooks, Ted Heusel, Perry Innes, Tom Lacy, Bob Miller, Dave Pollock, Hazel and Don Proctor, Pete Rocco, Brad Taylor, Ray Warzynski and Lawrence Ziegler

TAKE HORSE AND WAGON RIDE AT OWS HOUSE TOUR

The Old West Side House Tour 1--6 p.m. Sunday, September 20, will feature six houses ranging in age from the former Martha Washington House, circa 1860, now attorneys' offices, to a 1930's tudor revival.

Tourgoers may ride in a horse-drawn wagon from the last house back to tour headquarters, St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Shuttle buses and child care available. Tickets $4 day of tour, discounts for advance sale and senior citizens.

PIONEER DAY PLANNED

Waterloo Farm Museum will have its annual Pioneer Day 1--5 p.m. Sunday, October 11, featuring a variety of craft and food demonstrations and gift shop of handmade items. It is at 9998 Waterloo-Munith Road.

MARY BLASKE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF WCHS

Mary Steffek Blaske, editorial and administrative assistant of the Historical Society of Michigan, was elected president of the Washtenaw County Historical Society at its annual meeting May 28.

Frances Couch was named vice-president; Ethelyn Morton, corresponding secretary; Alice Ziegler, recording secretary; and Bradley Taylor, treasurer.

Elected directors were retiring president John Dann, David Pollock, Hazel Proctor, Iver Schmidt and Ted Heusel. Heusel will fill the vacancy caused by resignation of Ellen St. Amour, whose term expires in 1983. The other terms go to June 1984.

WCHS financial accounts as of April 30 showed a balance of $15,723.21 in the Society account plus $14,678.16 in the Barton Powerhouse account.

IT'S PIE IN THE FACE AND THE HINDENBURG AT WCHS MOVIE NIGHT

Thursday, September 24, will be old movie fun night at the WCHS meeting at 8 p.m. at the Salvation Army Citadel.

Art Stephan, a pianist (at Webers) who has a hobby — he says it's more like an addiction — of collecting old movies will select a few from his collection of hundreds to show.

The showbill may include newsreel footage of the Zeppelin Hindenburg, the latest fashions (of 1928) and some Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy silents.

Y'all come and bring your friends.

DHS ELECTS ANN NUTTLE

Ann Nuttle (Mrs. Paul) was elected president of the Dexter Historical Society, replacing Wallie Fusilier. Other officers are Earl Doletzky, vice-president; Suzanne Mahler, recording secretary; Rose VanAken, corresponding secretary; and Alice Pastalan, treasurer.

Nina Rackham is museum director; Lorraine Govaere, assistant; Wana Baldus, secretary. Area representatives are Margaret Guenther, Dexter township; James Parker, Webster; Charles Steinbach, Scio; Alicia Pratt, village; and Dan Teare, Dexter schools.

FALL FESTIVAL FEATURES 1836 LOG CABIN, BALLOON

An 1836 log cabin, recently re-erected at Cobblestone Farm, and a balloon ascension will highlight the Fall Festival 1--5 p.m. Sunday, September 27.

Other features will be tours of the house, showing recent restoration activities in parlor and kitchen ell, old time craft demonstrations, and horse and wagon rides. Gifts, refreshments on sale.

The log cabin was moved from Willis through the efforts of Dr. Leigh Anderson.

The Days When Miami Was An Ohio Indian; Detroit, Upper Canada; Toledo, Michigan

The 1981 WCHS tour was an excursion south of the Ohio border and a nearly two-century leap back in time. It was also on possibly the wettest June 13 of either century.

The tour visited the battle sites of Fallen Timbers and Fort Meigs just southwest of Toledo and heard again how Commodore Perry won his decisive naval battle a few miles out in Lake Erie.

Those battles helped open much of the Northwest Territory, including Michigan and Washtenaw County, to further American settlement.

Wystan Stevens, tour guide, noted that the long, flat stretch of farmland between Ann Arbor and Toledo used to be the bottom of a prehistoric lake called Lake Maumee.

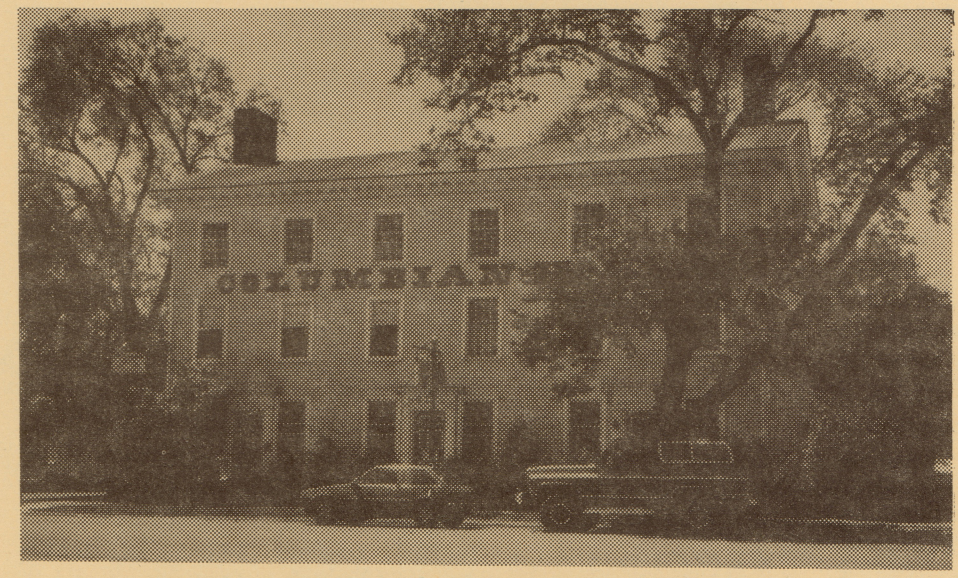
He read excerpts from *Washtenaw County History* explaining some of the background of the battles.

After the treaty of Versailles in 1783, ending the American Revolution, Michigan still remained under British control until 1796. The Indians, under Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet, fought further immigration by Americans.

The Americans first sent General Harmar and later General St. Clair who were routed by the Indians under Miami Chief Little Turtle in Ohio. Then General "Mad" Anthony Wayne set out to end the border warfare.

He trained his men carefully and engaged white scouts who had lived with the Indians. The scouts brought word that "warriors were gathering down the Maumee where a recent windstorm had left a swath of fallen timber," according to Historian Walter Havighurst in *The Heartland.*

At Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794, Wayne defeated the Indians within a few miles of British Fort Miamis, built to stop his expected march on Detroit. The following year the Treaty of Greenville was signed, breaking up the Indian confederacy.



1828 Columbian House where playful ghosts are said to blow out candles, rock chairs, lock doors, even show up in pictures though apparently not in this one.

At Fallen Timbers those who wished strolled back to the handsome monument of Wayne, a militia man and an Indian on the banks above the Maumee River, commemorating that brief, furious battle on another rainy day 187 years ago.

About two miles away in Maumee, the bus stopped at the site of British Fort Miamis where Indians retreating from Fallen Timbers found the doors closed.

The bus continued to Wolcott house, built in 1827 in Federal style architecture with a southern influence. Federal style has fireplaces with no outside chimneys. The first, and second floor verandah from which Judge Wolcott could keep an eye on his steamboat landing on the Maumee below, are a southern touch.

Costumed guides welcomed tourgoers in the basement room where Indians were always welcome during Wolcott's time. The house continued to be occupied by descendants until 1957 when its last occupant, Miss Rilla Hull, fourth generation, willed it for a museum.

The Wolcotts bought 300 acres in the Maumee Valley in 1825 and built a log cabin

James Wolcott was a Lucas county judge, mayor of Maumee and active in shipbuilding and freight forwarding.

The Maumee Valley Historical Society now operates the museum which is filled with Wolcott furnishings and a variety of other items.

The basement Indian room, now a meeting room, has grouped around its walls war and Indian items, toys, tools of trappers, cobblers and housekeepers. A floor was added to it and the heat unobtrusively installed in the floor.

The editor's tour group headed first to the second floor sitting and sewing room. A hair wreath hangs over the melodeon there. Displayed are old sewing machines, a sample stitch book, an 1816 framed sampler and other samplers, a Wolcott high chair, some Shaker items and a chimney cupboard.

Spinning wheels included a 12-inch portable model milady could take with her when she went visiting.

The current front room exhibit of Indian items had a costumed Indian mannequin, a Wyandotte Indian dugout canoe, elm bark baskets, a war club and birch bark kettles into which hot stones were put to cook the contents.

There were also pictures of Captain Wells, his daughter Mary Ann Wolcott and her daughter, Fredericka Hull.

In the next room were dolls, doll house, toy furniture made of lilac twigs, collections of cup plates, inkwells, tea pots, toy stoves, jewelry and a quilt made by a woman who had entertained General Pulaski in 1776.

A carved, cherry, high four-poster bed dominated the Wolcotts' bedroom. It was covered with a "blue resist" linsey-woolsey bedspread. A combination bed and toddy warmer sat on a stand. The floor is stencilled with a pineapple design. The wardrobe was pegged together and could be disassembled and moved.

Much of the woodwork in the house was walnut, painted. The guide noted that until about 1860, only candles and whale oil lamps were available. When coal oil came in, in 1860, it quickly took over.

In the dining room a yarn wreath hung over the bricked-up fireplace. A knife and fork holder on the wall featured mica inlay. There was a pin-prick picture and a cheese boat that would hold a whole wheel of cheese.

The oriental rug in the dining room is cleaned by taking it outside in winter, brushing snow onto it and when the snow is removed a lot of dirt goes with it, the guide said.

In an arched niche in the parlor stands a piano brought by steamboat from Buffalo for the Wolcott's daughter, Mary Ann. She had gone to school in Canandaigua, New York.

She also painted the design on the glass transom over the door. Everyone had a picture of George and Martha Washington in those days. A reverse glass painting of them hangs in the parlor, also a painting of the battle of Lake Erie.

The spiral front stairway to the second floor is similar, the guide said, to those found in Wolcott houses in Litchfield, Connecticut, from whence the judge came.

The judge's built-in desk is in his office where he held court. Also on display is Anthony Wayne's rosewood field desk. A petticoat chair, designed not to interfere with voluminous petticoats, had a candleholder attached to the chair back, handy but perhaps a fire hazard, the guide noted.

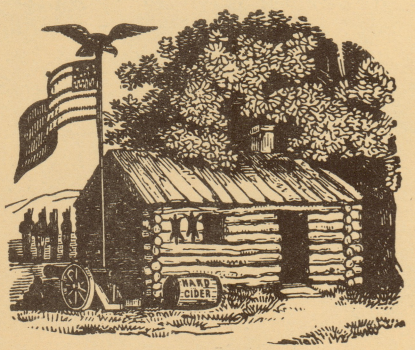
Unusual items in the basement included turtle rattles, an Indian-made doll complete with hair from a scalplock, and a sugar cone, perhaps 15 inches high. Sugar once came that way, wrapped in blue paper which yielded indigo dye to a thrifty housewife. The sugar was cut off with sugar snips.

The museum also has an early log cabin, depot, an 1840 saltbox house and an 1840 Greek Revival house on the grounds, the latter housing a gift shop.

The tour continued to the 1828 Columbian House in Waterville for luncheon. On the way the bus passed the 1835 Greek revival House of Four Pillars where Theodore Dreiser wrote the novel, *Sister Carrie,* in 1900, and the site of Dudley's Massacre (1813 during battle of Fort Meigs).

A candle-lit dining room greeted tourgoers at the Columbian House where a four-course luncheon with chicken a la king and house specialities soup romaine and tomato pudding (a meat accompaniment) were served.

The inn was built in 1828 by Rhode Islander John Pray, founder of Waterville.



The inn, on the National Register of Historic Places, is considered one of the finest examples of Federal architecture in the mid-west. Dr. John Dann, WCHS past president who discovered it, calls it "a little bit of New England."

Framing, interior woodwork and doors are mostly walnut. It has 14 inch hand-hewn beams. Guests enter through Pray's one-time Indian trading post and storage room. The women's rest room upstairs once housed prisoners overnight on their way to court in Maumee.

The Arnolds who run the restaurant live in the building. Their bedrooms upstairs are on view, furnished much as they must have been years ago except for a digital clock and a princess telephone.

After lunch Jackie Arnold showed tourgoers the third floor ballroom where Henry Ford brought his old time dance orchestra in 1928 and danced.

She also told about some of the ghostly happenings there. There is on display in the dining room a recent photograph of a friend and frequent customer of the Arnolds at the inn with an unexplained ghostly white something beside her.

After lunch the bus headed up the south side of the river to Fort Meigs, near Perrysburg.

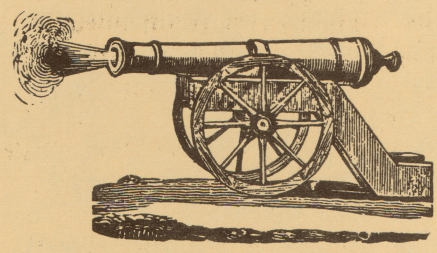
The 1813 fort, restored in 1975, is claimed to be the largest reconstruction of a walled fortification in North America, with more than 10 acres of land inside the log palisade walls on which are seven blockhouses.

General William Henry Harrison erected the original fort, named for then Governor Return Jonathan Meigs. Harrison's troops successfully defended the fort against two attacks by British and Indians under Colonel Henry Proctor in May and July 1813.

During the May battle, General Green Clay brought 1,200 Kentuckians to help Harrison. Clay, afterward left in charge of the fort for a time, was a great-great-great grandfather of Dr. Dann.

General Harrison ordered Clay to send some of his men to spike the British cannon across the river.

Lt. Colonel Dudley and his men were quickly successful but the overeager Kentucky militia then rushed in to battle Indians and charge the British camp. They met disaster. Dudley was tomahawked and 20 men massacred by Indians before Tecumseh stopped them and rebuked Proctor. As previously noted, the bus earlier passed the site of that massacre.



Harrison returned in 1840 when he was running for president and spoke at what was called the largest political rally ever held in Ohio.

Harrison Rally Days were to be held at Fort Meigs that weekend, commemorating the "log cabin and hard cider campaign" of old "Tippecanoe" Harrison, but alas the rains came, virtually washing it out.

A few tourgoers looked around the fort but when the rain renewed most went back to the bus where Tour Chairman Pat Austin and Evvie Huber, the bus driver, served lemonade and brownies. Only two or three saw cannon and musket fired by 1812 costumed troops during a let-up in the rain.

The bus passed the Oliver Hazard Perry monument by the river in Perrysburg. It was noted by Dr. Dann that the U-M's Clements Library has the letter city fathers of Perrysburg sent to Perry telling him they were naming the town after him. The library also has Wayne's papers.

As the bus headed back to Ann Arbor, Stevens read the Washtenaw County History account of the Toledo War which some think worthy material for a comic opera.

The struggle was over a narrow strip of land, eight miles at its widest and totaling about 470 square miles, including Toldeo.

During the conflict, Michigan partisans arrested Ohioan Major Stickney and tied him on a horse. When they tried to arrest his son, Two Stickney, the officer was stabbed with a knife, not seriously, drawing probably the only blood shed in the war.

(The frost-bitten convention in Ann Arbor in December 1836 accepted Congress's offer of the Upper Peninsula to Michigan instead of the Toledo Strip, paving the way to Michigan statehood in early 1837.)

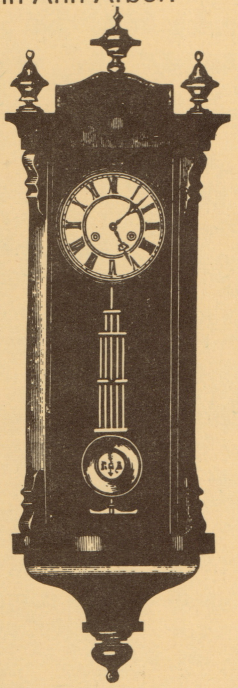
MAY HEIRLOOMS APPRAISAL DRAWS RECORD CROWD WCHS PLANS TO REPEAT IT THIS YEAR

By Mary Steffek Blaske

A WCHS tradition has begun!

At the May meeting of the Washtenaw County Historical Society, members brought in their favorite antiques and heirlooms for appraisal.

James Babcock and Demaris Cash graciously donated their time and expertise to the record-breaking crowd at the Salvation Army Building in Ann Arbor.



Babcock, formerly of Stalker and Boos of Birmingham, now operates his own bookstore in Algonac. He gave verbal appraisals of rare books, first editions, leather bindings, fine printing, early printing, books about America and Michigan as well as autographs.

Members brought books on wildlife, the World's Columbian Exposition, McGuffey Readers and books with fine leather bindings. Each person shared his treasure with other book collectors and the room was alive with stories.

Demaris Cash brought along a library of decorative arts identification books on jewelry, dolls, glass, pottery, furniture, textiles, silver, pewter, porcelain and folk art. Members had the opportunity to look up a variety of information on their object and then hear Demaris' expert appraisal on that object.

With their new-found information, members were able to ask more valuable questions of Demaris than had they not "studied" the object beforehand. Here too, each member swapped stories and learned how that particular heirloom became part of the family.

As the evening progressed, the room was animated by interesting people and interesting conversation. The best part was not only the discovery of the worth of the heirlooms, but the discovery of the worth of the membership in the WCHS. We all have a common bond in the Society — our past. It is a rich and varied past, but one that knits each of us together.

Because of the success of the antiques appraisal night, it will be repeated again in the 1981--82 WCHS program year.

CHESS SET, CARVED IN CIVIL WAR TRENCHES IN 1865 GIVEN TO WCHS BY O. W. BOSTON, TELLS UNUSUAL STORY

A small cardboard Civil War cartridge box and a copy of a Civil War corporal's diary presented recently to WCHS by Professor Emeritus Orlan W. Boston has an unusual story to tell.

The box contains a set of nicely hand-carved chessmen made by Union soldiers "in the pits" outside Petersburg, south of Richmond, Virginia, in 1865. They were sent to an Ann Arbor man in appreciation for his sending them newspapers, magazines and barrels of apples during the long months of the war.

The recipient was Charles A. Chapin, father of Lucy Chapin who presented Ann Arbor's first piano to the Society. Professor Boston's father, William Boston, a Union corporal, was one of a committee of three appointed by Company H of the 20th Michigan Infantry Regiment to express their thanks to Chapin.

The committee enclosed a letter in the box, dated March 4, 1865, explaining that the chessmen were a "specimen of pastime in the pits . . The set and the material of which they are made are the results of the everlasting jacknife and Yankee ingenuity combined with plenty of time and soldier's perseverance.

"The material is cedar and holly. The former grew by the side of the Petersburg and City Point R.R. at a point where it passes through our lines into the city, the latter is from the left bank of the Appomattox, a short distance from Point of Rocks, at which place tradition says Captain John Smith was rescued by the Indian girl, Pocahontas.

"Hoping to meet you in Michigan on the first of September next and shake hands over peace and union, we remain, Sergt. D. S. Munroe, Corpl. William Boston, Corp. Lewis S. Allen."

Petersburg and Richmond fell in April and Lee's Army of Northern Virginia surrendered April 9 at Appomattox Court House. Corporal Boston got home by September 1 but it is not known if he and Chapin ever met for a handshake.

Professor Boston published his father's Civil War Diary of 1862-65 in 1939. Miss Chapin read about it in *The Ann Arbor News* and gave the chess set and letter in its original box to him.

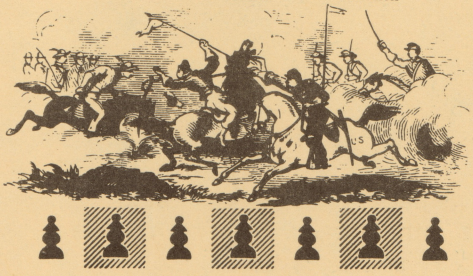
The box is labeled "42 Metallic Cartridges for the Spencer and Joslyn Carbine No. 56 Navy and Infantry Size, Manufactured by Crittenden and Tribbals, South Coventry, Conn. U.(S.)"

The diary, carefully annotated by Professor Boston with maps, snapshots, clippings and insertions from his father's letters, refers briefly to the chess set. The diary details day to day life and tells how Corporal Boston, laying wounded after the Battle of the Wilderness, watched enemy cavalry approach and order him to get up and follow them.

He protested he couldn't walk because of his foot wound. At the same time, he later told his son, he made a sign of a certain fraternal lodge to the captain of the cavalry unit.

"Whether the captain recognized it or whether he couldn't be bothered with a prisoner who couldn't walk, he ordered my father left there, and my father was able to crawl back to his own lines," Professor Boston said.

In the same battle a friend of his was wounded and captured the next day and spent three months in the infamous Andersonville, Georgia prison and five months in a similar one in Florence, South Carolina, withering from 162 pounds to 90.



Corporal Boston came through the Battle of Fredericksburg, took part in a skirmish in southern Kentucky against troops of John Hunt Morgan, later to be known as Morgan's Raiders, and was shipped down the Mississippi to Vicksburg, where he was struck down by a fever which lasted eight months. He was at Petersburg when Lee surrendered.

Professor Boston who now lives in Sedona, Arizona, was president of WCHS three years, 1965--67. His father died in Ann Arbor, March 25, 1915, and was buried in a family lot in Nashville, Michigan.

Charles A. Chapin was a business and newspaperman. Chapin Street is named for his father, Volney, who manufactured plows and other farm tools there. The Volney Chapin home was on North Fourth Avenue and Ann where Wooden Spoon Books now is.

1800'S MEALS INSPIRED FLIGHTS OF BLARNEY

Back in the old days, the Washtenaw Pioneer and Historical Society meetings were all-day affairs in different communities with an all-important break for dinner—yes, dinner—at noon.

The minutes record many a thank you for delicious repasts but perhaps none were surpassed by an 1876 Dexter meal and an 1887 Chelsea meal.

Of the Chelsea meal, it was noted that 200 attended and "the tables groaned with chicken pies, escalloped oysters, loaf cake, fried cakes and other luxuries."

Society members waxed so eloquent about the Dexter dinner one might wonder if they had Irish coffee—heaven forbid—at a Methodist Church. Their resolution read "To the citizens and ladies in particular of the Dexter Methodist Church: May their prosperity and liberality never wave nor the beauty of their wives and daughters never fade."

ALVIN JOSLYN HEADS GSWC

Alvin Joslyn of Ypsilanti has been elected president of the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County.

Other officers are Robert Lutz, vice-president; Erma Joslyn, secretary; Barbara Bryant, corresponding secretary; Thada Liskow, treasurer; Charles Liskow, assistant treasurer; Barbara Snow, librarian, with assistants Florence Stevens and Rosemary Baldwin.

Directors are Polly Bender, Harold Jones, Mary Liskow, Lydia Muncy and Edward Sayer.

GSWC will meet at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, September 27, at Washtenaw Community College. Beginner's class at 1 p.m.

"GO TO THE HEAD"

"In how many ways can a wagon cross a river?" asked a teacher of her first grade class; but none of the children could think of any other way except by bridge or ferry.

"There is another way, children," said the teacher, "and that is by a ford. Now, what is a ford?"

"I know," cried out one little fellow. "It's a big tin can on wheels wot makes a noise like an automobile."

From "Ford Smiles: All the Best Current Jokes About A Rattling Good Car," by Carleton B. Case, Shrewesbury Publishing Company, Chicago, 1917

HAGLERS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR RESTORED HOUSE

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hagler who moved and restored an old house will speak at the October 22 WCHS meeting. She is curator of fine furniture at Greenfield Village.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society — 7:30 p.m. second Monday at McKune Memorial Library, 221 S. Main St.

Manchester Historical Society — Annual meeting, election Monday, September 28. Place to be announced. Collectible sale August 8 added $550 to building fund.

Milan Historical Society — 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday of month at Hack House, 775 County Street.

Northfield Historical Society — 1 p.m. Sunday, September 27, at 150-year old St. Patrick's Church. Potluck, tour church, cemetery. Continue taping oral history from those present. Also September board meeting.

Saline Historical Society — All day Saturday, September 19, tour working and historic mills of area by car up to an hour's drive away. For information call Wendy Blackie, 429-9710, or Paul Meyer, 429-2749.

Sunday, October 11, 1--6 p.m. Saline area home and farm tour. Also crafts demonstrations, collections on display and old-fashioned music. Tickets $2 in advance, $2.50 day of tour.

Webster Historical Society — Fall Festival October 2--4 jointly with Webster United Church of Christ, Webster Church and Farrell Roads.

Friday, 7 p.m. at Community House, square dance with Cobblestone Dancers.

Saturday, 10 a.m. bazaar and country store; 4--7 p.m. pig roast dinner, $3 per person, $1.50 for children.

Sunday, 1--4 p.m. ice cream social; 4 p.m. community sing, also drawing for handmade queen-size quilt, sunshine and shadow design in shades of pink, rose and burgundy.

Also planned for the weekend are art and pioneer crafts displays, indoors and out, including beam hewing, rail splitting and stone cutting and laying at the Scadin barn, also a petting zoo and tours of church, barn and Mae Mast's barn paintings.

For dinner, quilt tickets and information call 426--5115 or 665--3901.

Regular society meeting, 7:45 p.m. Monday, October 5, at church. Program: slides of moving of former one-room school across road to be attached to the church for office and Sunday School, about 1955.

Ypsilanti Historical Society — Antique and modern lace display at museum through September. Museum open 2--4 p.m. each Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Lace making demonstration the 12th by Great Lakes Lace Group meeting the 9th--12th at EMU.

Annual dinner meeting Sunday, October 25. More later.

WENDY BLACKIE ELECTED

Wendy Blackie is president of the Saline Historical Society for 1981--82. Alice Byrne is vice-president; Paul Meyer, treasurer; and Joan Merrell, secretary.

Editor: Alice Ziegler, 663--8826
Keylining: Anna Thorsch
Mailing: Ethelyn Morton, 662--2634

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

8:00 p.m. THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 1981

SALVATION ARMY

West Huron at Arbana
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Ypsilanti Hist. Soc
220 N. Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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